

XX Region Fire & Aviation Management

XX Regional Rappel Program

Objective

This document serves as regional direction for the XX (XX) Helicopter Rappel Program. It provides a brief outline of Regional Office (RO) administrative and operational expectations for all the respective rappel bases located in XX.

1. Mission

The primary mission of each crew (contract helicopter and pilot, fuel truck, manager, crew and support vehicles) is to provide a rapid response initial attack firefighting force within a one-hour flight radius of the assigned operating base. To facilitate meeting the missions each crew will be heli-rappel qualified and equipped to support initial attack and large fire suppression efforts throughout the XX Region as needed and available. Movement of rappellers from one helicopter to another, also known as “boosting” is an essential part of efficient utilization of the rappel program.

2. Crew Organization

All rappel bases are expected to have a minimum of 1 sixteen-person crew, which includes:

- 1 career appointed (PFT) GS-9 Base Manager/Asst. Base Manager, (supervisor)
 - 1 Career appointed (PSE), GS-8 minimum 18 pay periods, Assistant Base Manager, (supervisor)
 - 2 career appointed (PSE, minimum 16 pay periods) GS-06 lead crew person.
 - 2 career appointed (PSE, minimum 13 pay periods) GS-05 senior firefighter.
 - 10 temporary appointed crew persons NTE 1039/ GS4/5.
- Additional personnel may be assigned to the crew, but funding responsibility will be the host unit.

Wenatchee and John Day rappel bases each have 1 GS 11 Base Manager as the result of additional air base complexity.

All crews should try to recruit persons having at least two seasons of prior wildland firefighting experience.

All crews will staff to the 2 – 1 ratio identified in the International Helicopter Rappel Guide (IHRG) Chapter 2.4.1 – “All Exclusive Use Fire Rappel Modules should maintain a ratio of two fully qualified Rappeller/Helicopter Crewmembers for every Rappeller/Helicopter Crewmember trainee.” The host forest shall develop and implement a span of control criteria for training, operations and program management.

3. Personnel Management

The host forest will be the administering unit for the module and has designated the helicopter be located at the identified base referred to in Appendix A. The Base Manager will ensure the program meets the standards of operation set forth in the FSM 5700 (5703.4 helicopter operations), the IHRG and other relevant documents.

4. Training and Qualifications

The host forest Fire Management Officer in consultation with the Forest Aviation Officer, XX Regional Helicopter Operations Specialist, Regional Helicopter Program Manager and the XX Rappel Working Group, will certify that all personnel assigned to the crew meet the wildfire suppression, rappel and aviation management training and experience requirements. The requirements of the position, are outlined in the IFPM (Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications), Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide, the Interagency Helicopter Rappel Guide, FSH 5109.17, and PMS-310-1.

The host forest is responsible for managing the training of personnel assigned to the crew, including the use of the performance based training system per NWCG and IHOG guidelines. Generally each PFT/PSE employee should receive 120-160 hours of aviation, fire related, and other training each year to maintain currency and aid in career development.

All XX rappel programs must participate in the XX Rappel Academy to assure rappel standardization within the region.

The Basic Helitack training will be completed prior to the XX Rappel Academy. Veteran rappellers will requalify no later than the first week of the Academy, and may be asked to qualify in May to meet regional staffing needs and to facilitate rappel spotter immersion training. New rappel crewmembers will be qualified after successfully completing the second week of Academy training.

To maintain daily rappel capability, each crew should strive to have the following qualifications and skills available in daily staffing:

- 1 Level 1 Spotters
- 1 Class C Fallers
- 2 Type IV Incident Commanders
- 3 Type V Incident Commanders
- 1 EMT or crewmember with advanced medical training

The host unit will maintain access to adequate rappel training facilities with a tower simulator.

5. Operations

The XX National Rappel Aircraft are available from June through September unless otherwise agreed to. The Rappel crews will initiate spring training and mandatory recurrency training a minimum of three weeks prior to the aircraft start date. Generally, the crews are operational by the second week in June. If the aircraft and crew receive a request for an order prior to the full operational date, discussions with the XX Coordination Center (XXCC), home forest duty officers and the Base Manager will dictate which aircraft and crew will respond.

Standard daily staffing will consist of a compliment of one level 1 spotter and eight rappellers. This staffing level will be maintained per the forest's approved specific staffing and action guide and should allow for an adequate days-off rotation while providing seven-day coverage. (During periods of low fire danger or adherence to work rest guidelines staffing may be less than full strength)

When the aircraft and rappel crew are dispatched in support of large fire activities, XXCC will negotiate with the incident and the host unit for configuration.

Throughout the fire season, XXCC may request Aerial Delivered Firefighters (ADFF) and their aircraft to be pre-positioned throughout XX per their XXXX Pre-positioning Plan.

Rappellers that are not utilized with the pre-position of the helicopter should remain available to provide support to any other rappel bases in need of boosting. Those orders will be placed with the appropriate host unit dispatch. When the receiving unit is not operating on an existing fire management code, the

XXCC operations manager will assign funding for pre-positioned and or boosting rappellers. The funding agreement should be in place prior to actual movement of rappellers.

There is no expectation that availability of crew members on scheduled days off is any different than expected of other employees on the unit. Rest/recuperation guidelines will be adhered to.

The crew will have an adequate number and type of dedicated support vehicles assigned to transport crew and required helicopter support equipment for program needs.

XXCC will be notified regarding the commitment of any aircraft to project work that would prevent it from being available for dispatch. During times of low fire activity, rappel crews and helicopter should be made available for project work as deemed appropriate by the Fire Program Manager.

6. Contract Administration and Payment Process

The Forest FMO will ensure a fully qualified COR and necessary Project Inspectors administer the requirements and specifications of the helicopter contract as well as the processing of all contract payments and supporting documentation.

For National type II helicopters, the performance and operating specifications will be determined in coordination with the National Office Helicopter Program Manager and national Helicopter Operations Specialist. The host forest will initiate the Request for Contract Action to be acted upon by the National Interagency Fire Center Contracting Officer as appropriate.

The XX Helicopter Program Manager is responsible for coordinating with the XX Maintenance Program manager to ensure all helicopter inspections are complete before start or resume work orders.

7. Facilities

The host unit is responsible for ensuring that all facilities are maintained and operated, per agency and OSHA standards. The host forest is responsible for development and approval of a base site plan and for scheduling any needed maintenance or construction projects. The host forest agency administrator has approval authority over the site plan.

8. Funding

The Forest Staff Officer will annually submit a draft project work plan to the RO for the out-year budget in late fall covering all aspects of the hosting and operation of the helicopter module for the out-year budget process. This will serve as the basis for distribution of shared resource funding. All leases and utilities costs should be included.

The RO will fund the request based on available funds and will negotiate changes as necessary with the host forest Fire Staff Officer. It is the RO's intent to fund the leadership positions (PFT, PSE) and crew for minimum tours, pre/post season cleanup, training, full year vehicles FOR, fire season mileage, base facilities operation, and equipment replacement and upgrades as needed.

Capital improvement projects will be submitted through the appropriate budgeting process.

9. Revisions

Revisions or necessary modifications to this agreement should involve the individual base managers and the host Fire Staff Officer in conjunction with the XX Rappel Working Group and the Regional Helicopter Program Manager. The XX Region Director of Fire and Aviation Management will provide final review and authority to the direction outlined in this document. An annual review by the host Fire

Staff Officer, XX Rappel Working Group and the Regional Helicopter Program Manager are recommended but as a minimum, it must be reviewed every three years.

Appendix A

Host Forest Base Locations;

XX National Forest

XX Rappellers are located at ABC Field in ABC, Wyoming